PhD Scholarship:

Social-ecological dimensions of freshwater fish management

Join our exciting new transformative research programme!

The University of Canterbury, Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, is offering a PhD scholarship in the field of human geography examining social-ecological dimensions of freshwater fish management. The scholarship is part of a large multi-disciplinary research project ‘Fish Futures: reimagining freshwater ecosystem management in Aotearoa’ (https://www.fishfutures.co.nz).

We are looking for a suitably qualified and highly motivated PhD candidate to join our work group and help drive our research exploring drivers of change and the dynamic relationships between people, freshwater fish and ecosystems. This 3-year scholarship (2023-26) will enable your collaboration with leading researchers in environmental management, freshwater ecology, human geography, and mātauranga Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

With the support of your supervisors, and in consultation with appropriate research partners and stakeholders, you will develop a PhD research project that supports the programme’s objective to understand how freshwater fish are valued and managed. Adopting a broadly social-ecological or human-environment perspective, your PhD could examine the dynamic relationships between people and ecosystems, social-cultural dimensions of fish management, or social-ecological drivers of degradation and/or restoration in freshwater fish management. The research will afford opportunities for fieldwork, case studies, collaboration across project work-streams, and engagement with mana whenua and key stakeholders.

We welcome applications from candidates with social research skills who are motivated to carry out original research, working across disciplinary boundaries and in collaboration with the wider research team, stakeholders, mana whenua and communities. Ideally you will commit to full-time PhD research, and commence study as soon as possible in 2023.

The research will be supervised by Dr Ed Challies at the Waterways Centre, School of Earth and Environment, University of Canterbury, potentially with other members of the Fish Futures team. For questions about the research project, please contact Ed Challies: edward.challies@canterbury.ac.nz. For further information about studying as a PhD student at the University of Canterbury, please see: https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgraduate/phd-and-doctoral-study/
Ideal candidate attributes

- A relevant Bachelors degree with honours or research-based Master’s degree (or equivalent) – e.g. in human geography, biogeography, environmental studies, ecology, social-ecological systems or a related field, and excellent coursework and thesis grades
- Excellent spoken and written English
- Be domiciled in New Zealand and be either a New Zealand citizen, permanent resident, or holder of a valid visa to study in New Zealand.
- An interest in and motivation to explore questions of freshwater fish management from a social-ecological, political ecology, or policy perspective.
- Familiarity with (or an interest in learning about) Te Ao Māori and Māori interests in freshwater and biodiversity.
- Familiarity with environmental and conservation issues and policy in Aotearoa New Zealand or other settler-colonial settings, and ideally with water governance/management issues.
- Experience with interdisciplinary and/or cross-cultural research and familiarity with relevant social science research methods (e.g. key informant interviews, focus groups, hui, etc.).

The Waterways Centre and University of Canterbury

The Waterways Centre is a multi-disciplinary research and teaching centre, jointly hosted between Canterbury and Lincoln universities, located in Christchurch, New Zealand. It sits within the School of Earth and Environment and the Faculty of Science, and works closely with allied schools and programmes, such as freshwater ecology, geography, engineering, and environmental science. The Centre maintains strong links to key organisations and stakeholders in the water sector in New Zealand and beyond. More information on the Waterways Centre is available here: http://www.waterways.ac.nz/. More information on the University of Canterbury is available here: https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/. More information on Ōtautahi Christchurch can be found here: https://www.christchurchnz.com/new-zealand/

Resourcing and remuneration

The project provides generous financial resources to support fieldwork and other project costs. The PhD scholar will be supported through both the broader ‘Fish Futures’ project team and the School of Earth and Environment at UC. The successful candidate will receive a fees scholarship (to cover tuition fees for thesis enrolment only, at the New Zealand domestic rate), and a stipend of NZ$30,000 per 120 points (full-time year) of thesis enrolment for three years. Workspace and standard resources will be provided at the Waterways Centre, University of Canterbury.

To Apply:

Please send a one-page letter of motivation, a one-page outline of your thematic interest in relation to the project (this need not be a fully formed research proposal), your CV and academic transcript, and a sample of your academic writing to suellen.knopick@canterbury.ac.nz. Applications will be assessed from 15 August 2023 until a suitable candidate is recruited.

Non-native English speakers please include evidence of English competence as per the University of Canterbury entrance requirements:
https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/enrol/international/english/#d.en.101610